

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MEETING OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

PUBLIC SESSION

October 10, 2006

The Science & Technology Advisory Council (“STAC”) met on Tuesday, October 10, 2006 in Public Session at 12:45 p.m. in the State Room at the RI State Capitol pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Members and public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island Law.

The following Members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Dr. Joseph Amaral, Dr. Clyde Briant (Co-Chair), Dr. David Hibbitt, Mr. Saul Kaplan, Dr. Richard Nadolink, Dr. Thomas Rockett, Dr. Jeff Seemann (Co-Chair), Mr. Donald Stanford.

Members absent were: Mr. Paul Choquette, Ms. Kimball Hall, Dr. Margaret Linean, Mr. Thomas Ryan and Ms. Cheryl Snead.

Also present were Governor Carcieri, Senator William Walaska, members of the Governor’s and RIEDC’s staff and Attorney Robert I. Stolzman. Dr. Seemann presided over the meeting.

WELCOME

Dr. Seemann called the meeting to order at 12:55 p.m. and thanked all members for contributing to the progress of the Council to date. He also introduced Christine Smith as a new STAC contact within RIEDC.

INTRODUCTION OF CLYDE BRIANT

Governor Carcieri introduced Dr. Clyde Briant, the Vice President for Research and Otis E. Randall University Professor at Brown University, as the incoming Co-Chair of the Council replacing Dr. Andries van Dam. The Governor thanked Dr. Briant for stepping forward and thanked the entire Council for providing guidance on initiatives that will have significant impact on the Rhode Island economy. Dr. Briant expressed he was looking forward to his participation.

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2006 iNNOVATE RI RECOMMENDATIONS

The next agenda item was a status report on the implementation of recommendations from STAC's January 2006 iNNOVATE RI Report, all of which were adopted through legislation or other means in 2006 by the Governor and the RI General Assembly. Dr. Seemann reported on the Research Alliance and Tax Credit; Mr. Kaplan reported on RIWINS; and Dr. Briant reported on the URI Blue-Ribbon Commission.

- **Research Alliance:** \$1.5 million in state research funding will be used to support collaborative research across Rhode Island's research institutions. \$1 million of these funds will be used to support new collaborative research (awarded through a competitive granting process), \$350,000 will be used to support research being conducted as part of Rhode Island's ESPSCoR program, and \$150,000 will be used to catalyze the creation of the Rhode Island Research Alliance. The grant application process will begin in early November with awards announced in January 2007.
- **Tax Credit:** Effective January 2007 a tax credit equal to up to 50% of the investment in a qualified company, for a total of credit of up to \$100,000, will be available to attract and retain serial entrepreneurs and encourage investment in Rhode Island companies engaged in innovation-focused activities.
- **Rhode Island Wireless Innovation Networks (RI-WINs):** \$200,000 was committed to extend the pilot phase of RI-WINs to the rural town of Foster to fulfill the goal of making Rhode Island the first state in the country with a border-to-border mobile broadband network. The EDA has awarded a \$270,000 federal grant to support the initiative.
- **Blue-Ribbon Commission:** A special Commission will evaluate research capacity at the University of Rhode Island and recommend specific actions to strengthen URI's position as a nationally competitive public research university and key driver of the state's innovation economy. Potential members are currently being vetted and the Commission is scheduled to be named in early 2007. The Commission is to report its findings by June 2008.

In response to an inquiry by Dr. Amaral, Dr. Seemann confirmed \$150 K of the Research Alliance funding would be dedicated to administrative support including efforts to identify additional funding opportunities.

Upon inquiry from Dr. Rockett regarding the grant application schedule, Dr. Seemann assured the timeline is doable and that catalytic collaboration and potential commercial applications will be key factors in naming grant awardees.

Responding to Mr. Stanford, Dr. Seemann stated the tax credit rulemaking is in process.

Upon inquiry from Dr. Amaral, it was confirmed that STAC would convene the URI Blue Ribbon Commission and the Governor was assured that the work of the Commission will be supportive of URI's strategic plans.

Senator Walaska expressed the need for measurable results illustrating the public policy impact that can be reported to the General Assembly.

COMMENDATION OF ANDRIES VAN DAM

Dr. Seemann extended thanks and gratitude to founding Co-Chair Dr. Andries van Dam on behalf of STAC for his efforts to move the work of the Council forward. These sentiments were echoed by the Governor and committee members. A plaque and citation will be delivered to Dr. van Dam, who was unable to attend the meeting.

NEXT STEPS

To assist the creation of a high quality pipeline for undergraduate students in STEM disciplines, Dr. Seemann reported STAC will support RI's initiative to take the lead in implementing the FIRST Vex experiential learning program on a state-wide basis for high school math and science students. Members then discussed the critical importance of managing STAC-supported seed projects for long term sustainability and results including the importance of implementation of findings. Upon question from Dr. Hibbitt, Dr. Seemann confirmed STAC would derive no proprietary interest in products of funded research.

The next meeting for STAC will be scheduled in January.

DISCUSSION

There being no further business in Public Session, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Christine Smith